

03/09/77

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

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TO : THE AMBASSADOR

DATE: March 9, 1977

THRU: ~~DCM~~

FROM : RSO:RJKelly *R.J. Kelly*

*and Phil...*  
*To Fred Rendon*

*Done 3/11/77*

SUBJECT: Estimate of Terrorist Activities/Elements - Argentina

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)  
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS  
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny  
Exemption(s):

Declassify: ( ) In Part (X) In Full  
( ) Classify as ( ) Extend as ( ) Downgrade to

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Reason \_\_\_\_\_  
Declassify on \_\_\_\_\_

On this date, RSO met with a mid-level career police officer who has been involved in counter-terrorist activities. Source stated that the Montonero threat has been seriously diminished and the ERP threat is almost terminated. Source stated that the Montoneros now are working in small groups with a maximum of ten persons. The groups do not have connecting links. They do not use their correct names but use what is referred to as "war names". The structure includes informants, gunmen and bosses. Persons recruited into the organization come in first as informants and then become gunmen, involved in an act of killing, normally police, and then based on killings will advance into positions of unit leadership. Source stated that at present the Montonero elements are involved in sporadic attacks against police and some bomb attacks at government targets. They are using weapons stolen from the police or the military and had in the past used weapons of Russian design. Source stated that their Montonero training and indoctrination is mostly Cuban and that they have received some funds from abroad but most of their money is accumulated through bank robberies and other criminal activities.

Source stated that the police and military intelligence units have penetrated the Montonero movements and that when they apprehend one member of a cell normally the others will flee because they know that the person apprehended will provide information concerning his associates. There is no retreat for the Montoneros; they have no sanctuary and even if they were involved in terrorist activities years ago, when their names and description come to the attention of the police, they will be hunted down. Consequently, many of the Montonero elements are now attempting to leave the country. In this they have difficulty because there are no countries with contiguous borders that will accept them.

cc: POL  
POL/R



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Uruguay and Chile have strong policies concerning leftist and terrorist guerrillas. Source stated that they cannot flee to Paraguay because President Stroessner has embarked on a program of exterminating all terrorist elements and this program is being vigorously followed through.

Source stated that Montonero infiltration of police was previously quite successful because the police did not do sufficient background investigation concerning their recruits. However, now they check them with great care. Source stated that the police still remain the main enemy of the Montoneros. The police know they are the principle target. Consequently, police officers travel to and from station houses out of uniform. Some of them let their hair grow long so that they cannot easily be identified as police. The previous Montonero tactic was to target a police officer as he left his precinct, follow him, shoot and kill him and capture his weapon. This has become more difficult recently. Last year over 70 professional police officers were killed in conflicts with the Montoneros. So far this year approximately 10 have been killed, mostly during the month of March.

Source stated that although labor elements would like to join and support Montonero elements they are afraid to. Laborers in Argentina are like sheep and need a leader. No one will emerge as a leader for fear of being identified and eliminated by the government. Consequently, there is little likelihood of a marriage between remnants of the Montonero forces and organized labor. Source stated that he is very optimistic <sup>concerning</sup> the destruction of the Montonero movement and thinks by the end of the year they will be finished. He stated that he doubts if the Montoneros have the brains to organize a successful attack on the diplomatic community. However, we must be continually on the watch because there will still be sporadic acts of terrorism until the Montonero situation has been resolved.

Source of this report stated he personally has interrogated numerous captured Montoneros and knows that Cuba has been the training and orientation center for this movement.

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